

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 T-03 ACDA-19 DPW-01 EUR-25 RSR-01 /150 W

----- 071791

R 161002 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9247

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 667

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CE, VN

SUBJ: CONTINUED NORTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATION THIRD- COUNTRY RULE

REF COLOMBO 182

1. AMB CALLED ON MDFA DIRGEN MENDIS AFTERNOON 14 MARCH TO PROTEST REMARKS MADE BY NORTH VIETNAMESE AMB HOANG THANH TRAI AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN COLOMBO PREVIOUS DAY. NORTH VIETNAMESE AMB'S REMARKS INCLUDED REITERATION OF CHARGE OF U. S. AGGRESSION, ALLEGATIONS U. S. WAS OPENLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY SABOTAGING CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT (ERNCLUDING DELIBERATELY DELAYING REMOVAL OF MINES), AND APPEAL FOR SUPPORT OF SRI LANKA AGAINST USG.

2. AMB REVIEWED U. S. CONCERN IN PAST OVER NORTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATIONS OF THIRD- COUNTRY RULE AND RECALLED HE HAD RAISED MATTER WITH PM JAN 19 (REFTEL). SAID HE HAD PLANNED TO SEND MDFA DETAILED RECAPITULATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE VIOLATIONS AT THAT TIME BUT HAD REFRAINED FROM DOING SO BECAUSE VIETNAM CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT WAS IN SIGHT AND HE WAS CONFIDENT THESE ATTACKS WOULD STOP. AMB THEN RECOUNTED MOST RECENT VIOLATIONS OF THIRD- COUNTRY RULE, INCLUDING STATEMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM EMBASSY BULLETIN, AND GAVE MENDIS AIDE- MEMOIRE SUMMARIZING HIS PRESENTATION. CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE HOPED GSL WOULD TAKE PROMPT STEPS TO INSURE SUCH VIOLATIONS CEASED.

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3. MENDIS, WHO INDICATED HE HAD ANTICIPATE AMB' S CALL, EXPRESSED REGRET AT NORTH VIETNAMESE REMARKS AND CONTINUED VIOLATIONS. HE EARNESTLY EXPLAINED THAT MDFA HAD BEEN VERY PATIENT WITH NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR OVER PAST TWO AND HALF YEARS. EACH TIME IT HAD CALLED IN AMB TRAI HE ACKNOWLEDGED HE WAS WRONG AND PROMISED TO OBSERVE THIRD- COUNTRY RULE IN FUTURE BUT HIS ACTIONS CONTINUED TO NEGATE THESE ASSURANCES. GSL WAS NOW FED UP WITH ADMONISHING AMB AND PLANNED TAKE CON- CRETE (BUT UNSPECIFIED) ACTION.

4. MENDIS THEN VOLUNTEERED EMBARRASSED EXPLANATION OF PRESENCE IN NEWS PHOTOGRAPH OF MARCH 14 PRESS CONFERENCE OF PM' S SON- IN- LAW, KUMAR RUPASINGHE, WHO WAS SEATED AT NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR' S LEFT. ACCORDING MENDIS, RUPASINGHE HAD ATTENDED CONFERENCE IN CAPACITY AS EDITOR OF NEW LEFT- WING SINHALA WEEKLY JANAVEGAYA. RUPASINGHE HAD BEEN GRABBED BY AMBASSADOR AND THRUST INTO SEAT BESIDE HIM WHEREUPON FLASH BULBS STARTED POPPING AND RUPASINGHE " REALIZED HE WAS TRAPPED." MENDIS STATED PM BANDARANAIKE UPSET AT INCIDENT WHICH, MENDIS SAID, BOTH DAUGHTER SUNETHRA AND SON- IN- LAW REGRET. DIRGEN FULLY AWARE OF CONCLUSIONS WHICH COULD BE DRAWN FROM PRESENCE RUPASINGHE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. AMBASSADOR THANKED MENDIS FOR EXPLANATION, REITERATED U. S. CONCERN AND HOPED NORTH VIETNAMESE WOULD NOW CEASE AND DESIST FROM VIOLATING THIRD- COUNTRY RULE. HE NOTED HE WAS ALSO SENDING LETTER TO PM EXPRESSING CONCERN AT NORTH VIETNAMESE ACTIONS SUBSEQUENT TO THEIR COCKERSATION JAN 19. MENDIS INTERJECTED HE WAS GLAD AMBASSADOR WAS DOING SO.

6. COMMENT: NORTH VIETNAMESE DIATRIBE HAS CONTINUED ALMOST WITHOUT ABATING DURING ENTIRE TIME SINCE LOCATION NORTH VIET- NAMESE EMBASSY HERE. AMB HOANG THANH TRAI, JUST PRIOR TO CEASEFIRE, WAS TOURING COUNTRY AND MAKING PUBLIC SPEECHES ATTACKING U. S. HIS EFFORTS UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN HALF SRI LANKA PARLIAMENT SIGNING PETITION INJAN CALLING ON U. S. TO GET OUT OF VIETNAM (COLOMBO 79). PRESENCE NEOPHYTE NEWSMAN KUMAR RUPASINGHE IN SEAT OF HONOR AT MARCH 14 PRESS CONFERENCE UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIVED AND ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER HE AWARE OF WHAT WAS PLANNED. IN VIEW MENDIS REASSURANCES, AND IN AFTERMATH CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT, WE WOULD HOPE GSL
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WOULD NOW EFFECTIVELY CURB NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR' S ATTACKS

BUT GSL' S RECORD IS NOT ENCOURAGING ONE.
VAN HOLLEN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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